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ABSTRACT

This document is North Carolina's response to Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the Twenty-first Century, a national report by the Carnegie Council Task Force on Young Adolescents. Turning Points urged state governments to build consensus and strengthen the capacity of local communities to improve middle grade schools. This document responds by addressing 10 key topics: (1) school organization; (2) curriculum; (3) instruction; (4) student success; (5) health concerns; (6) technical assistance; (7) professional staff; (8) teacher preparation; (9) parents; and (10) communities. The discussion of each topic includes the focus, the rationale and current situation, and recommendations. A glossary of terms is appended. Fifty-eight references are included. (RH)

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MIDDLE GRADES TASK FORCE REPORT

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North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Report to Bob Etheridge, State Superintendent

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MIDDLE GRADES TASK FORCE REPORT

LAST BEST CHANCE

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Report to Bob Etheridge, State Superintendent

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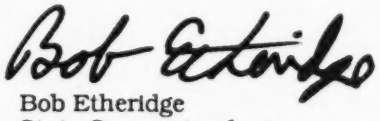
FOREWORD

This document is a response to *Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century*, a national report by the Carnegie Council Task Force on Young Adolescents. *Last Best Chance* was prepared by a Task Force that I appointed in response to that report and will gain consideration from me, the State Board of Education, the Department of Public Instruction, and others interested in better education for all our children.

As this report is studied and considered, we must make sure that its recommendations will contribute to helping all young adolescents in North Carolina achieve a more productive and fulfilling life and are in balance with the overall thrust that our state has chosen as it attempts to revamp its educational system.

I commend this report to you for intensive study.



Bob Etheridge
State Superintendent
January, 1991

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Force is grateful to State Superintendent Bob Etheridge for his immediate response to the Carnegie Corporation call for state action on middle grade issues. The Task Force appreciates the work of the co-chairs, Sammie Campbell Parrish and Nancy Farmer in their diplomatic leadership to keep our discussions focused and productive. As primary editors, Nancy Farmer and John Arnold synthesized many ideas and refined the suggestions made by Becky Barnette, Elaine Boysworth, Janice Davis, Vann Langston, Ken McEwin, Laura Mast, Ginny Myers, Pam Riley, Joe Webb, and Elsa Woods.

We are also grateful to the support staff in the Department of Public Instruction. For her cooperation, patience, and attention to detail in processing and reprocessing this publication, we are indebted to Lisa Cobb. We also want to thank Beverly Parker for formatting the final publication and Jackie Johnson-Hawkins for the cover design.

And finally, we are very grateful to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for the resources to publish this booklet. The Carnegie Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative Grant makes the report accessible across North Carolina and paves the way for future improvements in middle level education.

PURPOSE AND FORMATION OF TASK FORCE

The Carnegie Corporation of New York established the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in 1986 to place the plight of 10 to 15 year olds higher on the nation's agenda. In 1987, the Council created a Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents under the chairmanship of David W. Hornbeck, former Maryland Superintendent of Schools. The Task Force drew members from education, research, government, health, and the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. It commissioned papers, met with experts, and examined first-hand new approaches to foster education and the healthy development of young adolescents. The result of the Task Force's work was *Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century*, a ground-breaking report that is a clarion call to all concerned about the future and fateful choices for 10 to 15 year olds.

Turning Points urged state governments to build consensus and strengthen the capacity of local communities to improve middle grade schools. Specifically, it asked every state superintendent of education or governor to lead the effort and immediately "convene a task force to review the recommendations in this report and determine what must occur to enable their adaptation to the needs and circumstances of local communities."

In July, 1989, at the East Carolina University Middle Grades Summer Institute, State Superintendent Bob Etheridge announced the formation of the Superintendent's Middle Grades Task Force. The task force was to represent all groups involved in serving young adolescents and, though most committee members would be selected for specific expertise, the public was invited to participate.

As a result, the 44 member task force met for one year, concluding its work in October, 1990. The group's goal was to analyze the Carnegie recommendations in *Turning Points* and, where needed, to make suggestions for improvements in North Carolina. The report is organized around ten key topics: (1) school organization; (2) curriculum; (3) instruction; (4) student success; (5) health concerns; (6) technical assistance; (7) professional staff; (8) teacher preparation; (9) parents; and (10) communities.

The Task Force members are as follows:

Warren G. Anderson, Instructor, High Point College

John Arnold, Professor, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, North Carolina State University

Marilyn Asay, School Nurse Consultant, Department of Environmental, Health and Natural Resources

James Atkinson, Assistant Principal, Shelby High School, Shelby City Schools

William R. Batchelor, Principal, Riverside High School, Durham County Schools

Robert Bingham, Chairman, Watauga County Board of Education

Elaine Boysworth, Middle Grades Consultant, Southwest Regional Education Center

Bill Brewington, Principal, Pembroke Junior High School, Robeson County Schools

Jane Burke, Principal, Hertford High School, Hertford County Schools

Frank Burrell, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Jackson County Schools

Judith Davidson, Project Director, Project on Adolescent Literacy, Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Janice Davis, Assistant Superintendent, Granville County Schools

Harold Estep, Principal, Allen Middle School, Greensboro City Schools

Robert Frye, Health Education Consultant, Program Services, Department of Public Instruction

Nancy Gibson, Principal, Prince Ibraham School, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

Theresa Hinkle, Teacher, Griffin Middle School, High Point City Schools

Gary Hobbs, Vocational Education Consultant, Northeast Regional Education Center

John Howard, Principal, Rogers-Herr Middle School, Durham City Schools

Bob Marley, Chief Consultant for Compensatory Education, Program Services, Department of Public Instruction

Gerry Martin, Consultant, Staff Development/Leadership Institute for Administrators, Personnel Services, Department of Public Instruction

Ben Matthews, Executive Consultant, Financial Services, Department of Public Instruction

Larry Matthews, Teacher, Rochelle Middle School, Kinston City Schools

C. Kenneth McEwin, Professor, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, Appalachian State University

Mary Jane McReynolds, Principal, Aversboro Elementary School, Wake County Schools

Sue Medley, Associate Superintendent, Greensboro City Schools

Ginny Myers, Middle Grades Consultant, Southeast Regional Education Center

Judy Novicki, Coordinator for Student Assessment and Program Evaluation, Camp Lejeune Schools

Peggy Parsley, Teacher, Troutman Middle School, Iredell County Schools

Ione Perry, Director, Division of Teacher Education & Certification Services, Department of Public Instruction

Pam Riley, Social Studies Consultant, North Central Regional Education Center

Gary Sanderson, Associate Superintendent, Duplin County Schools

Don Spence, Professor, School of Education, East Carolina University

James Surles, Principal, Stedman Junior High School, Cumberland County Schools

John Van Hoose, Professor, School of Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Al Walker, Dean, School of Education, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Charles R. Watson, Graduate Intern, School of Education, East Carolina University

Brennen J. Williams, Program Specialist, Mecklenburg County Schools

George E. Williams, Professor, School of Education, East Carolina University

Beth Ward, Principal, G. R. Whitfield School, Pitt County Schools

Pat Widdowson, Middle Grades Supervisor, Surry County Schools

Janie Wilson, Teacher, Southern Middle School, Alamance County Schools

Elsa Woods, Division Director - Middle Schools, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

Co-chairs
Sammie Campbell Parrish, Assistant Superintendent for Program Services, Department of Public Instruction

Nancy J. Farmer, Middle Grades Consultant, Program Services, Department of Public Instruction

Fateful Choices

Young adolescents face significant turning points. For many youth 10 to 15 years old, early adolescence offers opportunities to choose a path toward a productive and fulfilling life. For many others, it represents their last best chance to avoid a diminished future. (*Turning Points*, p. 8)

Early adolescence is the most dramatic period of growth beyond infancy with profound changes occuring in physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral development. These changes engage young people in critical choices. At stake is whether they will develop the capacity to maintain healthy lifestlyes, become individuals yet part of a group, create stable friendships, learn to think in complex ways, and embrace sound values.

These changes are never easy, even in the best of circumstances. For many, they become exceedingly difficult in a rapidly changing and oft-confused society such as ours.

Changing family roles, patterns, and relationships make it difficult for some young people to forge the adult connections necessary to develop a healthy identity and safe passage through adolescence. Thus at a time when youngsters need adult guidance and support the most, many receive it the least. In addition, mixed messages about right and wrong abound. Society incessantly urges young adolescents to consume and to have a cover girl or macho image; it exposes them to violence, duplicity, greed, and self-indulgence; it tempts them with drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. While ignoring their fundamental needs, it unjustly sterotypes them as inherently irresponsible people, full of "storm and stress".

Little wonder then, that young adolescents today are increasingly involved in risk taking behaviors that can negatively affect their futures. Caught between the dependence of childhood and the independence of adulthood, many of them feel a desperate sense of isolation. Unfortunately, as we shall see in this report, schools are too often part of the problem.

A Profile of Young Adolescents in North Carolina

North Carolina currently has 244,111 students in grades 6-8, representing approximately 22% of the total school population. The ethnic breakdown is 67% white, 30% black, 1.7% American Indian, .8% Asian, and .5% Hispanic. Forecasts predict small but steady

increases in the number of Hispanics. Thirty-five percent of these students live in mid-size cities or urban fringes; 29.3% in small towns; 28.8% in rural areas; 3.5% in large towns; and .3% in a large cities.

Young adolescents face many changes in their family circumstances. In 1980, 25,000 children in North Carolina had parents who divorced, a 58% increase since 1970. Seventy-two percent of mothers with school-age children are currently in the workforce. In single-parent families, 77% of the mothers are working, a percentage higher than any other state. An estimated 25% of children in this state are "latchkey" youngsters. Moreover the number of troubled children is increasing. In 1989, 11,588 youths under the age of 16 were arrested, with 50% involved in "Category 1" crimes, the most serious offenses.

Family income also affects the lives of 10 to 15 year olds. Poverty is the single most powerful predictor of quality of life. Though the median family income is $27,509 and the average per capita income is $13,332, approximately 22% of all school-age children live below the poverty level. Poverty level percentages vary from lows of 8% in some counties to highs of 70% in others; 63 of 100 counties have percentages that exceed the national percentage of 19.8%.

Health statistics for this age group are also a cause for concern. A 1989 statewide random sample of seventh and eighth graders showed that 23.3% had consumed alcohol in the last 30 days, and an alarming 5.1% were getting drunk on at least a monthly basis. Six percent indicated marijuana use within a 30 day period while 1.2% reported using cocaine during that same time. In 1988, there were 822 reported pregnancies and 459 induced abortions for girls 10 to 14 years of age. Among this age group, there were also 567 reported cases of gonorrhea. Seventy young adolescents died due to injuries, 61 due to motor vehicles and drowning accidents. In 1987, a total of 51 young people ages 10-19 took their own lives. Three of these were under the age of 14. Experts suggest that for every successful suicide, there are three unsuccessful attempts and that 60% of all young people have thought about suicide. For each consecutive year between 1983-1988, the number of children reported as physically or sexually abused and neglected has increased. Of the 35,110 abuse cases reported, a total of thirty-five percent were substantiated. Thirty to 50% of runaway youths reported significant abuse or neglect.

Schooling for Young Adolescents

Students ages 10 to 15 are housed in a variety of school organizational patterns. Including schools with some combination of grades 5-8, North Carolina has 20 different grade patterns (e.g., K-8, 6-8, 7-8, 7-9, 7-12). Over the past decade, a significant and continuing shift toward the 6-8 middle grade school has occurred. In 1978, North

Carolina had 58 schools in grades 6-8; this year the figure has risen to 172. The number of K-8 and 7-9 schools has declined significantly. In addition, there is a massive statewide building program underway with many more 6-8 schools on the drawing board. The majority of young adolescents in North Carolina attend grade 6-8 middle schools, and many more will do so in the future. Although not all 10 to15 year olds are in grades 6-8, this report will concentrate on these key grades regardless of the school grade configuration.

Beyond the matter of grade organization, there is the more important issue of philosopy and program for middle grade schools. North Carolina has a variety of perspectives: we place young adolescents in elementary programs designed for young children; in junior high schools that assume a "little high schooler"; in high schools that recognize no developmental differences; in mixed programs that incorporate aspects of a middle school; and too infrequently in middle grade schools designed to fit the needs of young adolescents. Lacking an indepth understanding of 10 to 15 year olds, many programs are essentially directionless.

Many young adolescents in our schools are at risk of academic failure. Non-promotion rates for sixth and eighth grade range from 2.2 to 3.6% but rise dramatically to 9% in ninth grade. From the total school population, 4.8% drop out each year, 15% of whom are under the age of 16. American Indians currently have the highest dropout rate of all ethnic groups. An estimated 39% will drop out within the four years of high school. Though small gains have been noted on the California Achievement Test scores, sixth and eighth graders continue to receive lower percentile scores than do third grade students statewide. Among the three subtests of language, reading, and mathematics, reading scores remain the weakest. Average scores rarely have improved by more than one percentile point since the California Achievement Test was revised in 1985. Score analysis shows that absenteeism contributes significantly to poor test performance at all grade levels. To some extent, middle school problems are reflected in scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, used as part of admission criteria for most colleges and universities. North Carolina ranks next-to-last on its average verbal and mathematics scores among the 50 states reporting data.

The Challenge

Beyond these statistics, too many young adolescents attend schools that provide few opportunities for them to connect with adults or classmates in a personal way, rushing students from teacher to teacher, class to class, and stranger to stranger. Too frequently they are asked to memorize facts about subjects that have little relation to their lives. Thus many students withdraw from learning or put forth far less effort than they are capable of. The situation can be tolerated

no longer. Young adolescents today are more at risk of destructive behaviors than ever before, and many are adopting unhealthy lifestyles. The adolescent years are the time when young people begin to determine answers to the fundamental questions of life, to select their values, standards, and aspirations..."the time in which the lines of character are graven". There is a critical need to help 10 to 15 year olds acquire a sense of personal worth and belonging, flexible and inquiring habits of mind, and a capacity to contribute to the well-being of others.

The challenge is clear. For many students, early adolescence is the last best chance to grow and develop in a healthy manner. It is imperative that middle grade schools become caring and stimulating places. Now is the time for fundamental reform and attention to the middle level school, a pivotal institution in the lives of young adolescents.

NOTES:

Focus

The middle grade school proposed here is profoundly different from many schools today. (*Turning Points*, p. 36)

The middle grade schools must be restructured in a more human scale. The student upon entering middle grade school should join a small community in which people-students and adults-get to know each other well to create a climate for intellectual development. (*Turning Points*, p. 37)

The key elements of these communities are schools-within-schools or houses, students and teachers grouped together as teams, and small group advisories that ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult. (*Turning Points*, p. 9)

Rationale and Current Situation

Young adolescents are often faced with an impersonal school environment. Many must change classes six or seven times each day, assemble with a group of 26 classmates, sit quietly in a row, and try to connect with teachers who are responsible for 150 students. They have to accept that their classes are often unrelated -- that the content in one subject has little to do with the content of another. There is no time for special help. Never mind that young adolescents have concerns about physical development or that there are troubling peer issues.

Middle level schools must change so that they focus clearly on the needs and characteristics of the age group they serve. Every student should be taught by a small, caring team of teachers who share a common group of students, a common schedule, and adjacent classrooms. Students should also be members of small group advisories that provide guidance and discussion of the immediate needs of young adolescents.

In North Carolina, many factors currently exist which affect the ability of school districts and individual schools to reorganize schools into small communities of learning. Many school districts have no long range plans for middle grade programs. Administrators frequently lack expertise in middle level education. Schools vary in grade configuration and size, even within the same district. Some schools have to stretch resources over as many as nine grades, limiting their ability to create teacher/student teams, flexible schedules, and small group advisories. Small districts trying to implement a full *Standard Course of Study* often utilize itinerant staff in the elective areas making it difficult, if not impossible, to organize into teams. As a result of

these factors, many schools experience difficulty in focusing on the needs of middle schoolers. Though many districts have expressed a long term desire to move to a team arrangement, until recently organizational change has been slow to occur. Several districts have established exemplary middle schools but these districts remain the exception rather than the rule.

The General Assembly, though it mentions middle schools in select dropout prevention and vocational education legislation, has no definition of middle school in its statutes. As a result, program funding formulas often do not tie in with the predominant 6-8 grade pattern. For example, the *Basic Education Program* breaks grades 6-8 into two patterns (4-6, 7-8) with different allotment provisions. The state allotment for teaching positions clearly affects a district's ability to reorganize middle level schools into teams. Some districts have been able to establish teams through careful and focused utilization of the non-categorical *Basic Education Program* positions funded by the General Assembly. However, the teacher funding formula does not take into account the necessary common planning time for teachers, thus limiting reorganization efforts. Over the past twenty years, there have been special programs and allotments for elementary and high school programs with minimal singular focus on youngsters 10 to 15 years of age.

The State Board of Education has specified grades 6-8 as the preferred organizational pattern for the middle years. However, except for the establishment of middle grade teacher certification requirements, little has been done to help the middle level compete successfully with the other two levels in obtaining special considerations for its students.

There is great demand across the state for restructuring the middle level school with interdisciplinary teams, advisory programs, and a flexible schedule.

Recommendations

1. The General Assembly, State Board of Education, local boards of education, and the Department of Public Instruction should formally recognize the middle grades as a separate and distinct level of schooling. This recognition should be reflected in all policies, program and staffing allotments, reports, and committees.

2. Local school districts should develop a written middle level plan specifying expectations for middle grade organization, administration, staffing, curriculum, instruction, special programs, student activities, assessment/evaluation, and parental involvement.

3. To create small or more personal communities of learning, schools should be organized to support houses, interdisciplinary teams, and advisory programs.

a. Schools should provide a stable clustering of teachers and students in a school-within-a-school, or house arrangement. Students may remain in the same house until they move on to the next level of schooling.

b. Schools should be organized into interdisciplinary teams. Teachers within teams would share a common group of students, have reasonable control over large blocks of time, and have common team and individual planning time during the work day. Special area teachers should be thoroughly integrated into the team organization. The focus of team work would be student learning, personal development, and group citizenship encompassing all aspects of student life and success in school.

c. Every student should be a part of an advisory group that meets on a regular and frequent basis to promote group guidance activities and a close relationship with at least one adult at school. Virtually all certified staff should participate in this program.

4. To provide opportunity for schools to organize into interdisciplinary teams, the General Assembly should lower the teacher/student allotment formula for middle grades. The fully funded Basic Education Program allotment should change to 1-21 for grades 6-8. While this formula would not change the average class size of 1 to 26, it would increase the number of staff in the arts, health, physical education, second languages, and vocational education and provide the necessary common planning time for the interdisciplinary teaching team.

5. The General Assembly should increase the base allotment for *Basic Education Program* positions in small school districts for the specific purpose of initiating middle level teams with common planning time and providing a more complete elective program.

6. Local school districts should formally address the connections and interrelations among elementary, middle, and high school programs. Such a focus would include student development, a K-12 curriculum sequence, integration across content areas, varied and developmentally appropriate instructional strategies, and parental information and involvement.

Focus

Every student in the middle grades should learn to think critically through mastery of an appropriate body of knowledge, lead a healthy life, behave ethically and lawfully, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society. (*Turning Points*, p. 42)

Rationale and Current Situation

The rationale for this goal is straightforward. The future of this country as a stable and prosperous democracy, as well as the full development of individuals, requires us to pursue it diligently. The goal implies selecting curricular content that promotes logical and higher level thinking in an active, engaged, manner; that fosters exploration and inquiry within and across disciplines; that develops understanding and care about one's body, mind, and relationships; that promotes life affirming values, respect for others, and a desire to work toward the betterment of society.

Through the *Basic Education Program*, North Carolina has developed a full *Standard Course of Study* for young adolescents. When fully funded all students should be provided: a required basic curriculum -- arts education (students may choose from dance, music, theatre arts, visual arts), communication skills, health, guidance, library/media and computer skills, mathematics, physical education, safety, science, social studies; and, an elective curriculum -- second languages, vocational education.

North Carolina has made considerable progress in curriculum development and can point with pride to a number of exemplary projects and programs. This notwithstanding, the "what we teach" still needs improvement.

In general, schools have relied on dry textbooks and worksheets, instead of stimulating materials rich in meaning that stress higher order thinking skills and active engagement. Too often the various disciplines do not include material that helps young people understand themselves as young adolescents; all seems geared to their future. An interdisciplinary approach to the curriculum, while on the increase, is nevertheless a rarity. The quality and emphasis upon health education varies dramatically from school to school, suffering from a lack of status and trained personnel. Some schools, especially those with advisor-advisee programs, emphasize multicultural education and citizenship; in other instances, it is "hit-or-miss." Only a handful of schools have functioning community service projects.

State policies are of course significantly related to these circumstances. First, it should be noted that the *Basic Education Program*, which addresses some of the deficiencies noted above, was only partially funded for 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Second, the *Standard Course of Study*, while helpful in many ways, has a number of flaws relative to middle level education: (1) It has no holistic middle grades focus, splitting these grades into 4-6 and 7-8 segments, a procedure not reflective of state certification or school grade organizational patterns across the state; (2) It does not sufficiently address the developmental characteristics of young adolescents; (3) By its separate subject format it provides no formal support for an integrated, interdisciplinary approach; (4) Though thinking skills are stated as a priority, it lacks a central, underlying emphasis on them. (5) It has no community services component.

Third, the California Achievement Test places too much emphasis on recall of facts, offering little opportunity to deal with higher order thinking skills. Also, it does not adequately address key topics included in the *Standard Course of Study*.

Recommendations

1. The General Assembly should make the *Basic Education Program* a top priority and recommit itself to funding it fully. A developmentally appropriate program should be provided for all middle grade students.

2. The Department of Public Instruction in conjunction with educators across the state should revise the *Standard Course of Study* to include:

a. A reorganization into K-5, 6-8, 9-12 grade clusters (the predominant grade patterns in North Carolina).

b. An introductory section that addresses the needs and characteristics of young adolescents and the specific implications for school progams.

c. A review of all content areas relative to the characteristics of the age group with greater emphasis on critical and creative thinking, active learning, hands-on approaches, process skills, inquiry methods related to the "here and now," decision-making, communication, and problem-solving.

d. A comprehensive analysis of the relationship and integration of one subject area to another, grade by grade, subject by subject. For example, the relationship of writing skills to social studies, science, and health education.

e. A more central role in the total school curriculum for affective education, particularly those aspects which help young adolescents understand themselves and their peers.

3. The Department of Public Instruction should develop multi-faceted ways to evaluate students such as portfolios, writing samples, and criterion-referenced tests which reflect the revised *Standard Course of Study* in the arts, communications skills, health, mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, and second languages.

4. The Department of Public Instruction should work to provide a balanced focus on early childhood, middle, and high school programs.

a. All Department staff should have a basic knowledge of middle level education. Routine, internal staff development focused on middle level issues should occur on a continuing basis.

b. The Department should use its new organizational structure to address middle level education across its various service areas. Short-term work groups could be formed to discuss issues and study problems.

5. Local education agencies must re-emphasize that the *Standard Course of Study* is the state curriculum. Textbooks and other instructional materials such as audio-visual programs, computer packages, manipulative kits, games, maps, and globes should support the goals and objectives of *Standard Course of Study.*

6. Schools should require every middle level student to participate in a school and/or community service program each year.

NOTES:

Focus

Developing a discipline of mind requires a radical departure from traditional classroom instruction. Above all, it requires a shift in long-held beliefs that the role of teachers is to transmit knowledge to students. Instead, teachers must view themselves as facilitators through which young people construct knowledge themselves. Teachers will be called upon to promote a spirit of inquiry and to stimulate students to think about and communicate ideas. Far greater reliance will be placed on learning techniques that allow students to participate actively in discovering and creating new solutions to problems. Learning often takes place best when students have opportunities to discuss, analyze, express opinions, and receive feedback from peers. (*Turning Points*, p. 43)

Rationale and Current Situation

Like other aspects of a school program, instruction must reflect the nature and needs of the learner. Young adolescents want and need concrete examples, active involvement, and to see relevant applications and connections in what they learn. They ask us to let them "do something" about classroom goals and objectives. Passive, unrelated learning is contrary to every aspect of their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Although organizational change has taken place in many middle schools in North Carolina, limited change has occurred in instructional strategies. Most learning still takes place in a traditional lecture mode in which teachers attempt to transmit knowledge and/or skills to students. In this environment, the needs and interests of young adolescents are seldom addressed and the human and material resources of the community are not adequately tapped. The subject matter is too often one discipline treated in isolation with no linkage to other subjects being taught and little relationship to the everyday problems of youth and the contemporary concerns of our society and world.

Recommendations

To provide developmentally appropriate instruction, teachers of young adolescents should:

1. Work toward developing in students a feeling of personal efficacy and a sense of responsibility for themselves and others. Make use of

cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and other strategies that promote mutual respect and support.

2. Relate school learning to "real life," relevant situations with active involvement for students in their own learning.

3. Plan activities which emphasize higher order thinking skills transcending simple recall and personal opinion. Also use questioning strategies which encourage students to think and communicate their thoughts.

4. Match instruction to the unique learning style of each student using a variety of teaching strategies and instructional materials (in addition to textbooks).

5. Apply basic skills in all content areas consistently providing interdisciplinary connections. Make interdisciplinary assignments to students such as group projects, interviews, and experiments that involve two or more areas of study.

6. Develop a homework policy that is developmentally appropriate and consistently enforced by all members of an instructional team.

7. Design and implement a multi-faceted evaluation system to be used in judging the overall effectiveness of the instructional program as well as the achievement level of each student. Also provide for student self-evaluation in this process.

8. Use the flexibility inherent in the blocks of time available to the instructional teams.

NOTES:

Focus

All young adolescents should have the opportunity to succeed in every aspect of the middle school program, regardless of previous achievement or the pace at which they learn. (*Turning Points*, p. 49)

Rationale and Current Situation

Statistics show that as young adolescents move from elementary to middle level schools, their involvement with learning diminishes and alienation, drug abuse, absenteeism, and dropping out begin to increase. The typical truant generally has low self esteem, feels powerless in school, and often becomes resentful. The same can be said for the dropout and the student who becomes involved in drug abuse. Success in school leads to positive self esteem which leads to improved learning. If we acknowledge this and accept responsibility for correcting it, we must look at our current practices and make some necessary changes so as to ensure student success and diminish these feelings of alienation and low self esteem.

David Elkind in *All Grown Up and No Place to Go: Teenagers in Crises* offers insights into student's feeling and motivations. "Students fail to realize their potential because the organization of today's schools militates against the mentoring of such students by individual faculty members. Self definition, for example, is facilitated by being with people who know us well and who give us useful information about ourselves. The more people who know us well, the more likely we are to get a balanced picture of ourselves, since the biases of one person will more than likely cancel out those of another." A key element to student success is a caring, positive, persevering adult who motivates students and helps them build self esteem.

Data on effective teaching and successful practices indicate that students learn best in an environment that is flexible, nurturing, and organized. The impersonal school in which students know neither their teacher nor peers almost guarantees that the intellectual and emotional needs of students will not be met.

Middle schools, in particular, are faced with effectively teaching students of diverse abilities with differing rates of learning. Despite the pervasive use of tracking or ability grouping, research clearly demonstrates that this practice is ineffective. Though potentially harmful to all young people, students placed in lower tracks are locked into low expectations and a watered down curriculum year after year. All too frequently students accept and internalize the

teacher's low expectations. Needless to say, this is likely to restrict opportunity as an adult. Because minority students are disproportionately placed in these groups, tracking reinforces racial isolation and increases alienation.

North Carolina has not done enough at the middle grades to provide successful school experiences for all students. The dropout rate, retention figures, and drug and alcohol abuse statistics cited in the introduction document the need for improvement. In addition, many highly able students are not provided appropriate challenges. Ability grouping, sometimes seen as a panacea for dealing with diversity, is pervasive across the state. Research shows it is related to racial isolation and does not improve achievment, especially among low-achieving students. Greater heterogeneity among classes is possible and does not eliminate specialized services for the learning disabled, Chapter 1, academically gifted student, etc. All young adolescents should have the opportunity to succeed in every aspect of the middle grade program. If North Carolina's middle level schools are to become highly successful in educating young adolescents, circumstances must change.

Recommendations

1. Educators should endorse and act on the philosophy that every student can learn. Schools should be organized and managed in a way which demonstrates that philosophy to students. This philosophy would necessitate a full curriculum available to all students and the elimination of tracked classes, homogeneously grouped according to some achievement level.

2. Teachers should maintain high expectations for students at all levels while facilitating successful experiences.

3. Educators should regard academic failure as an unacceptable outcome with the focus on mastery learning and student success. Individual schools should develop special instructional programs and services for students who are judged to be at risk of school failure to reduce the possibility of retention. Alternatives to retention such as cross-age grouping, peer tutoring, extended day programs, and summer school options, should be implemented.

4. Local school districts should assess individual student progress at frequent intervals and provide reteaching for those who have not mastered the curriculum. Different pathways and different resources should be utilized to ensure continuous learning.

5. Schools should provide challenging and enriching activities for students with special interests and/or abilities such as independent

study, self-paced learning, extended day programs, or summer school opportunities.

6. Schools should build a comprehensive recognition system that reaffirms the successful performance of students.

7. The Department of Public Instruction and local school districts should continue efforts to provide appropriate staff development for teachers to differentiate instruction and involve students in the learning process.

NOTES:

Focus

Young adolescents must be healthy in order to learn. Middle grade schools must accept a significant responsibility, and be provided sufficient resources to ensure that needed health services are accessible to young adolescents and that schools become health-promoting environments. (*Turning Points*, pp. 60-61)

Rationale and Current Situation

Young adolescents entering puberty are vitally concerned with their rapidly changing bodies, thoughts, and feelings. In conjunction with these changes they have many questions. Some new health problems, such as acne, appear and previously managed health problems can become difficult during the adolescent years. Early adolescence is also the beginning of the formation of important health habits, such as exercise, eating, and tobacco use, that can determine lifelong health status. In today's society, the variety of risks, environmental hazards, and educational impediments to which young adolescents are vulnerable is enormous and growing. These risks include, among others: drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse; sexually-transmitted diseases; suicide and homicide; stress; injuries; pregnancy; and physical and sexual abuse.

In North Carolina, school responsibilities for the general health and well-being of young adolescents have varied through the years, but seldom extended beyond simple notions of annual vision and hearing tests, height and weight measurements, a physical education period designed mostly for games and sports, and a few health classes on days when it's too rainy to go outside. Unfortunately, poor children who need these services most receive them least; their parents frequently do not or cannot take them to community health agencies. Few schools provide regular and frequent access to health professionals. With regard to school nurses, national recommendations call for one nurse per 750 students. In North Carolina, however, most school nurses are responsible for providing health services to from 4,000 to 6,000 students, with this case load often distributed across eight to ten schools. Given these large ratios, daily health needs and preventive health services for students are frequently neglected. In addition to concern for intellectual achievement, middle grade schools have a significant responsiblity for the total quality of life of their students and graduates. Personal, family, community, and career success depend on good health. Comprehensive school health programs that address the total person are essential for responding to the changing needs of the young adolescent.

Despite the inadequate attention to developing comprehensive school health programs, the state has made a significant commitment to combat the growing problem of alcohol and other drug abuse. In 1985, the General Assembly placed full responsibility on schools to establish a sequential K-12 prevention program and to identify at-risk students for the delivery of early school-based intervention services. The Alcohol and Drug Defense Section in the Division of Student Services, Department of Public Instruction, provides training and technical assistance for prevention, identification, and intervention programs plus educational services to school-age youth in residential treatment centers. Though the alcohol and drug abuse program addresses a specific problem, efforts are being made to integrate its curricular and intervention services with all school programs. Middle grade students in particular have benefited from: Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), a collaborative prevention program sponsored by school and law enforcement personnel; Student Assistance Programs, an intervention service that works with all phases of in/out-of-school support to an individual student; in-school peer/self-help groups; and educational services for students in residential treatment centers.

Recommendations

1. Local school districts and individual schools should adopt and implement the eight-component comprehensive school health-programs model of the American School Health Association. The model has the following eight interlocking physical, mental, social, emotional, and intellectual aspects that are addressed by a systematic, planned approach.

a. Healthful School Environment - A healthy school environment is safe, both emotionally and physically. School policy and staff behavior mirror this concern. There are safeguards against violence, drugs, tobacco, and weapons with the emphasis on prevention.

b. Health Instruction - Health instruction addresses young adolescents' present and future health needs. Instruction is carefully planned and conducted by certified staff, who are prepared to deal with the biological and medical aspects of the subject and the psycho-social aspects of human thinking and behavior. A comprehensive substance abuse program is integrated into the health curriculum.

c. Health Services - School health professionals have a prominent role in planning and providing health promotion and early intervention services for both students and staff. School nurses play a pivotal role in the health screening, risk assessment, and consequent development of appropriate programming.

d. Physical Education - The physical education program stresses regular and frequent fitness activities that promote the development of lifelong fitness habits. Intramurals should be provided to involve all students in a wider variety of physical activities.

e. School Counseling - School counselors are an important link in the school-site health promotion program, providing individual and group counseling related to health as well as social and developmental concerns. They serve as resources to teacher-based guidance programs.

f. Food Service - School food services provide healthy, nutritious, and interesting meals and snacks that reinforce the message students receive through health instruction.

g. School Site Health Promotion for Faculty and Staff - School personnel organize and implement a wide variety of health and wellness activities.

h. Integrated School and Community Programs - The success of the school health program depends upon the support of the community. Joint school/community partnerships use community resources for health instruction, school site health promotion programs, health services and referrals.

2. The General Assembly should provide funds to employ school nurses at a ratio of one to 750 students or one per building.

3. Local school districts and individual schools should advocate the importance of the health education curriculum and work to make it a more vital part of the total school program.

4. Local education agencies and area health organizations should work together to provide middle level students not only health information but direct access to comprehensive health service agencies; wherever possible, such services should be provided on school grounds.

NOTES:

Focus

Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades. (*Turning Points*, p. 9)

Many teachers of young adolescents today dislike their work. Assignment to a middle grade school is, all too frequently, the last choice of teachers who are prepared for elementary and secondary education. Teachers view duty in the middle grades as a way station. Other teachers of young adolescents lack confidence in their ability to teach these students. For others, it comes from a lack of training related to early adolescence, coupled with the pervasive stereotype regarding the near impossibility of teaching young adolescents. This situation must change drastically. The success of the transformed middle grade school will stand or fall on the willingness of teachers and other staff to invest their efforts in the young adolescent students. (*Turning Points*, p. 60)

All teachers who are licensed or certified to teach should, upon completion of their education in middle grade schools, receive a supplemental endorsement to teach at that level. A middle grade endorsement would recognize the special talents and training of a teacher who has decided to teach young adolescents... encourage schools of education to offer specialized courses for the middle grades, and... provide a fully legitimate status for middle grade teachers. Teachers are unlikely to prepare for a career for which there is no recognition to practice. (*Turning Points*, p. 60)

Rationale and Current Situation

North Carolina has taken a leadership role in the special preparation and certification of middle grades teachers and has established a national reputation for its accomplishments in these areas. Since 1983, North Carolina has gone beyond the recommendation of offering endorsements as suggested by the Carnegie Task Force with the provision of a full middle grades certification plan. North Carolina's 6-9 subject specific middle grades certification plan is considered one of the best in the nation and should be continued. By making this certification mandatory and by elimination of much of the overlapping of grade levels covered (K-6, 6-9, 9-12 instead of K-8, 7-12), many talented and capable prospective teachers have selected middle grades teaching as a career. Thousands of practicing teachers have also completed graduate degrees in Middle Grades Education. The continuation of this innovative certification plan is essential to

improving the educational opportunities and general welfare of young adolescents.

A number of North Carolina higher education institutions have established exemplary teacher preparation programs. Beyond the requirements of middle grades certification, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors and General Administration has been instrumental in the establishment of separate degrees in Middle Grades Education at the undergraduate and graduate levels for the system of state-supported colleges and universities. This plan is believed to be unique in the nation and is currently garnering much interest from institutions in other states. The State Department of Public Instruction has also been very supportive of middle grade teacher education in many ways. The current certification plan and the provision of separate guidelines for middle grades teacher preparation programs serve as examples of that leadership and support.

Despite North Carolina's seven year recognition of the need for specially-trained middle level teachers, the majority of classrooms at this level are still staffed by teachers who were initially prepared and chose to teach other age groups. As a consequence, it is anticipated that the largest percentage of Senate Bill 2 certification waivers will be requested at this level. These requests underscore the need for middle grades teacher education programs that graduate teachers with a broader base of content knowledge as opposed to the single-area trained high school educator. To develop interdisciplinary teams and an integrated approach to learning, programs that prepare teachers to instruct in two disciplines are a must.

In terms of principals, North Carolina has not differentiated its training expectations for school administrators, offering a K-12 principals certificate. Special learning opportunities are needed for this population of educators.

We can celebrate the accomplishments of North Carolina while recognizing the danger of losing momentum. Plans for carefully evaluating teacher preparation and certification programs and addressing the needs of the school principal are essential to continued success. Recommendations for the further improvement in the preparation and certification of middle grades educators follow.

Recommendations

1. The State Board of Education should maintain its current 6-9 middle grades certification plan.

2. The University of North Carolina should keep its current, exemplary middle grades degree program which requires graduates to be prepared in two subject areas.

3. The State Board of Education should require concentration in two subject areas for all middle grade undergraduate programs in the state.

4. The Department of Public Instruction should initiate a review of the certification guidelines and competencies for middle grades teachers. Particular attention should be given to the advisory role of teachers.

5. Collaborative activities among educational groups and organizations should be strengthened and expanded.

a. Institutions of higher education should continue to engage in and promote research in middle grades education, early adolescence, and other related areas.

b. Institutions of higher education should work as active partners in Initial Certification Programs by helping teachers to develop requisite skills and by providing follow through at school sites.

c. Institutions of higher education must promote, recognize, and reward service in the field among their faculty.

d. The Department of Public Instruction and local school districts should develop a more consistent policy for certifying teacher applicants who are not graduates of teacher training programs.

e. The Department of Public Instruction, institutions of higher education, and local education agencies should develop and implement a plan to actively recruit capable middle grades teachers.

f. The Teaching Fellows Program administered by the Public School Forum should continue to provide activities that recognize middle grades as a separate and distinct level of schooling.

6. The State Board of Education should initiate a comprehensive study of current practices of middle grades programs in all institutions of higher education. With nearly a decade of the 6-9 certification, revisions in programs and certification matters are needed.

7. Institutions of higher education should strengthen their emphasis on middle grades understandings and competencies in areas of K-12 certification (e.g., physical education, second languages, visual art). Local education agencies should assume an active role in providing K-12 certified educators with ongoing middle grades staff development opportunities.

8. Institutions of higher education should be encouraged to offer courses or special seminars that prepare middle level principals.

NOTES:

Focus

The Carnegie Report identified technical assistance as the first critical issue to be addressed by a state task force on middle grade education. Specifically each state should determine whether technical assistance is available to divide large schools into several subschools or houses and to create teams. Are schools organized to recognize the needs of students aged 10 to 15 for stable and supportive relationships with peers and teachers? Do teachers have sufficient common planning time to operate effectively as a team? (*Turning Points*, p. 83)

Rationale and Current Situation

To improve middle grade schools there must be a broad and comprehensive structure of technical support.

As previously mentioned under "School Organization", the State Board of Education prefers the 6-8 organizational pattern though it has not recognized the middle grades as a distinct level of schooling with particular programmatic characteristics. There are no specific policies, procedures, and regulations that support interdisciplinary teams, a flexible schedule, and small group advisories.

However, within the Department of Public Instruction, there has been a middle grade consultant position for over 14 years to provide technical assistance to school districts and individual schools. For four years, the Leadership Institute for Administrators, the staff development arm of the agency, has provided special middle school training for principals and central office personnel. The Leadership Institute has also provided short-term internships to assist school leaders in visiting other districts to observe interdisciplinary teams, advisory groups, and inquire about scheduling options. Other programs and consultants have provided some assistance but a great percentage of the staff/programs have a high school orientation, a frequent hinderance in providing special services for young adolescents. The Department has the potential to address middle level issues across service areas but such efforts have been more informal, not established goals. In two regional centers, a consultant is specifically assigned to work with middle schools developing teams and advisory groups.

At the local level, there are some central office leaders with middle school expertise. Unfortunately, these knowledgeable and skilled school people are too few in number and are a fairly recent phenomenon in the district structure. All too often, middle grade programs are an "add-on" assignment to a high school supervisor.

Seven of the 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina have provided summer institutes, drive-in conferences and/or special seminars addressing ways to develop middle school communities of learning. The North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools, a 14 year old professional association, has provided assistance through its annual conference, regional conferences, study groups, newsletters, journal, and videos. The Center for Early Adolescence located in Chapel Hill continues to provide support services to individuals and schools and recently has become more involved in state advocacy efforts for improvements in the middle grades.

A rather unique addition in the area of technical assistance has been the North Carolina School Boards Association attention to middle level issues. In addition to discussions at regional meetings, the association has sponsored special clinics to inform local school board members of middle school goals, programmatic characteristics, and outcomes.

North Carolina does have middle school experts in its state education agency, local school districts, colleges and universities but the number is insufficient to meet the demand. The recognition of middle grade schools as an educational entity by the state would provide the focus and support required to command the development of further expertise in all educational institutions.

Recommendations

1. The General Assembly and State Board of Education must recognize the need for specific, technical assistance through their service agency, the Department of Public Instruction.

2. The Department of Public Instruction should strengthen its efforts to assist middle level schools.

a. As vacancies become available, it should hire more individuals with expertise in the major components of middle grades education such as team organization, flexible scheduling, teacher-based guidance, instructional methodology, curriculum correlated to the developmental needs of the middle grades learner, technological education, and site-based management.

b. The Leadership Institute for Administrators should develop a comprehensive training program on all aspects of middle level education. An annual middle grades institute, targeting principals, should be a routine part of their service agenda.

c. The Department should develop an internal middle grades coordination effort to address middle level issues across the five service areas.

d. Research and Development Services within the Department of Public Instruction should target research money for middle level projects.

e. Each regional center should have at least one middle grades specialist knowledgeable in all aspects of effective middle grades practices. This staff person should assist regional schools in improving middle grades education and provide liaison services within the region and across the state.

f. Each regional center should identify model demonstration sites for one or more aspects of middle grades programs. To assist others, these schools should develop supportive audio-visual materials.

3. Local school districts should provide numerous opportunities for central office leaders to gain expertise in middle level education that enables them to provide direct technical assistance to educators in their own district.

4. The University of North Carolina System should establish three middle grade information/learning centers - one in the east, piedmont, and west. The centers would contain middle level resources and information and provide practical staff development for local school districts, individual schools, and individual educators.

5. The North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools should continue to expand its services to members, particularly in terms of publications, audio-visual materials, and regional activities and take on a larger advocacy role across the state.

6. Other educational organizations in the state (e.g., North Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, North Carolina Math Association) should provide support for improvement in middle grade programs.

7. The Center for Early Adolescence should be commended for strengthening its North Carolina connections by appointing a State Advisory Committee, but also be encouraged to maintain its involvement in the North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools Annual Conference and continue to seek local state sites and funds for research projects.

8. The North Carolina School Boards Association should continue to provide yearly opportunities for local school board members to learn about middle level programs and goals.

Focus

Teachers must understand and want to teach young adolescents and find the middle grade school a rewarding place to work. (*Turning Points*, p. 58)

What incentives would increase interest of teachers in working with young adolescents and making a commitment to middle grades education? (*Turning Points*, p. 83)

Teachers and administrators in middle grade schools today are, as in all levels of American education, severely limited in their ability to make key decisions regarding their own professional practice. (*Turning Points*, p. 54)

Rationale and Current Situation

The overall goal of the Carnegie report is that "the 15 year old who has been well served in the middle years of schooling will be: an intellectually reflective person; a person enroute to a lifetime of meaningful work; a good citizen; a caring and ethical individual; and a healthy person." To realize this vision, the public-at-large and the educational community should support efforts to develop individual teacher qualities as well as provide a good work environment.

Countless reports have been written about the talent drain from the teaching profession and a possible shortage of educators in the future. Individuals who may have selected teaching as a career have been attracted to other professions for better salaries, benefits, rewards, and overall work environment. The North Carolina report *Conditions of Teaching and Being an Educator* documents many of the environmental and circumstantial problems that educators face on a daily basis. Certainly the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program and the Center for the Advancement of Teaching are noteworthy efforts to respond, in part, to financial and morale issues within the profession.

In addition to these general concerns, there are the unique needs and characteristics of young adolescents. Some have described 10 to 15 year olds as the most difficult group in all of K-12 schooling. References to this age group . . . "in-between agers", "hormone heaven", *Caught in the Middle, All Grown Up And No Place to Go* . . . allude to the difficulties in understanding young adolescents and the uncertainties of those who live and work with them. Combine

the reputation of this age group with the fact that the majority of educators in our schools did not choose to work at this level and it is only logical that middle level educators need a strong support structure to maintain their commitment.

In terms of existing support, teachers have access to Effective Teacher Training and a mentor support system. Both programs are state efforts and, though containing relevant material, lack specific recognition of and attention to the middle level environment. Some district-wide staff development and university institutes are also available and are more likely to address middle level concerns. Senate Bill 2 has helped the cause for school-based assistance, programs focused on young adolescents, and teachers playing the lead role in determining areas of need. In schools with interdisciplinary teams, team leaders are needed to facilitate team goals and activities plus serve as a liasion to a larger school improvement council. These individuals have additional duties though they are rarely compensated. Non-teaching duties and clerical work are still a source of great distraction in a teacher's day-to-day work. Over the years there have been some efforts to increase school and teacher recognition. However, many awards like the U.S. Office of Education Schools of Excellence Awards are still categorized as elementary or secondary. More opportunities are needed to specifically motivate middle level educators to learn, experiment, and push for excellence.

With regard to teacher assessment, the Effective Teacher Training Program and the companion Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument have been the thrust of the evaluation process in North Carolina. Both the program and instrument can be used for all teachers with no differentiation in length of service, expertise, or varying methodologies for the different developmental stages of the learner. The appraisal instrument, in particular, focuses almost entirely on direct, whole group teaching and does not encourage the methods of active engagement that young adolescents need.

Another critical problem has been the lack of administrative leadership. Most school districts at the central office level have no one by title or designation that focuses on broad middle grade issues. As mentioned under "Teacher Preparation", North Carolina has not differentiated its training expectations for administrators. There are no state experience prerequisites for being a middle grades principal. However, a few school districts have recognized the need for special skills and experiences to work with young adolescents and have established local requirements.

Recommendations

1. The Department of Public Instruction should appoint a committee of middle level experts to revise the guidelines provided for instruction in the Effective Teacher Training Program, the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument, Initially Certified Program, and the Mentor Training Program, to include a middle school learner and teacher perspective.

2. Recognizing that teacher preparation extends beyond the undergraduate degree and initial certification and that the majority of teachers working in middle level schools were not specifically trained for this level, the Department of Public Instruction, the University of North Carolina System, private schools and colleges and local education agencies should provide middle grades staff development programs as part of the continuing education process. Appropriate topics should include: the nature of young adolescents; interdisciplinary team organization; teacher-based guidance; varied and appropriate instructional strategies; a variety of methods in student assessment; effective discipline procedures; understanding tests and test results; and communication techniques with students, parents, colleagues.

3. School districts should initiate a multi-faceted support structure for middle level education. This would include: a team approach in hiring practices; orientation for all new personnel; district and school-level staff development with teachers having a central role in selection and direction; annual program evaluations of their program (e.g., a survey to students, parents, teachers).

4. Every school should establish a school improvement council which engages in decision-making on school governance, creative strategies to reach goals, hiring of faculty, budgetary decisions, staff development programs, discipline policies, and student evaluation.

5. Local education agencies should provide compensation to team leaders for additional duties commensurate with coaches, band directors, and department chairs.

6. Local education agencies should consider supporting professional personnel through tangible acknowledgements: for length of service, special projects, achievement, innovative strategies; for directing after school activities, and community service projects; and by employing additional staff to assist with non-teaching duties and clerical work.

7. Based on teacher suggestions, all local education agencies should develop a variety of incentives for tenured personnel. These incentives might include: provisions for attending conferences and conventions; stipends for participating in summer institutes; release

time for visitations with other professionals (businesses, schools, community-based resources); and sabbaticals.

8. Local education agencies should have differentiated evaluation procedures for tenured personnel.

9. All local education agencies should designate a coordinator at the central office level specifically for middle grades. This individual should be an advocate for middle level concerns in the school system and community.

10. Local education agencies should hire individuals as middle level principals who have successful teaching experience at this level or who have competence relative to the middle school learner in such areas as: interdisciplinary team organization; teacher-based guidance; flexible scheduling; varied instructional strategies; and positive school climate for young adolescents.

NOTES:

Focus

Despite the clearly documented benefits of parental involvement for students' achievement and attitudes toward school, parental involvement of all types declines progressively during the elementary school years. By middle grade schools, the home-school connection has been significantly reduced and in some cases is nonexistent. Reversing the downward slide in parent involvement and closing the gulf between parents and school staff with mutual trust and respect are crucial for the successful education of young adolescents. (*Turning Points*, pp. 66-67)

Rationale and Current Situation

Parental understanding and involvement in local schools has always had positive results for students. Parents' connection to the school enhances a child's chances for success and sense of belonging. Though no statewide figures are available, North Carolina most certainly mirrors the rest of the nation with decreasing involvement during the middle years.

At the state level, there have been a few efforts directed toward parental involvement with most of the work geared to a select group of students (e.g., Chapter 1, American Indian) and their parents. The emphasis of these programs has shifted over the years from including parents on advisory councils to helping them work with their children at home. Recently, the State Superintendent announced plans to provide school districts with monthly theme packets related to parent concerns to use as they so choose.

At the local level, school districts across the state have provided a wide range of services including parent conferences at work sites, transportation for school events, evening classes on topics such as how to live with 10 to 15 year olds, and tutorial programs to support parental learning. Much more effort is needed if we are to truly reengage families in the education of young adolescents.

Recommendations

1. Schools should continue outreach efforts to meet with parents and assist them in helping their child learn at home.

2. Schools, either individually or through district and/or service agencies, should initiate parent education programs that address the

characteristics of this age group, positive parenting techniques, and positive home-school relations.

3. Beyond the traditional parent-teacher association and more recent parent advisory councils, parents should be included in school governance committees and participate in decisions related to school goals.

4. Teams should utilize a variety of methods to keep parents informed and connected to the school. Some typical examples include a pre-school letter to parents, regular telephone calls, frequent notes, dinners, evening programs, awards and celebrations.

5. Schools should consider assistance from parent volunteers in initiating school and/or community service projects.

NOTES:

COMMUNITIES

Focus

Schools and community organizations should share responsiblity for each middle grade student's success. A community that sets out to educate all its young adolescents to become competent, responsible, and productive adults must marshal its resources behind its schools. (*Turning Points*, p. 70)

Rationale and Current Situation

This country has often been successful in solving problems at the local level. Since public school goals and concerns are local issues and exist within the context of community life, it is only natural that partnerships between schools and communities provide great benefits to both.

The Community Schools Act of 1977 formally began North Carolina's state-funded attention to this area. The legislation specifically called for more information to the general public regarding school activities, increased community involvement in school programs, and greater public use of school facilities. In 1990, all 134 school districts have a community schools coordinator producing a variety of programs and services. To keep the public better informed about school activities, there are local newsletters, regular newspaper articles, radio announcements, and television reports. Increased community involvement in school programs can be seen in: school volunteer services that are classroom-focused; school-business partnerships providing personnel, materials, other resources; and foundation initiatives that create grant and scholarship programs. Greater public use of school facilities can be observed in a monthly calendar of county/city recreational programs, community college classes, club meetings, and routine voter registration activity.

With more than half the mothers of school-age children in the workforce, after-school care programs have emerged, though most are targeted for children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

North Carolina can be proud of its efforts to date, but many more community linkages are needed to support the needs of young adolescents. After-school and weekend recreational activities are still not adequate. Health agencies continue to have only minimal connections to middle grade schools and lack the broader connections to businesses and other youth-serving agencies. More formal initiatives are needed to produce multi-agency cooperation.

Recommendations

1. Communities should initiate the formation of an Inter-Agency Youth Council. Participating agencies should have equal responsibility for addressing the needs of young adolescents in local communities.

2. School districts should request increased services for young adolescents by other community service agencies. Local communities should provide more wholesome after-school, weekend, and summer activities including recreational, sports, enrichment, and tutorial programs.

3. The State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction should support school transportation plans that include use of state buses for increased community services for young adolescents.

4. Schools and community organizations should work together to assist students in becoming more aware of community needs and participating in area service projects.

5. Schools should continue to seek individual volunteers who provide secretarial, media, and tutorial assistance and serve as classroom speakers, etc.

6. Schools and businesses should initiate and expand partnerships that bring business people and their resources into the school.

NOTES:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ability Grouping - grouping students for learning based on intelligence quotients and/or achievement levels.

Advisory Program - a teacher-based guidance effort that provides every student with one adult advisor who serves as a friend, advocate, and a small group leader. The group meets frequently on a regular basis and typically focuses on personal/social develoment, educational advisement, school-wide communication, home-school-community relations.

Basic Education Program - a state-funded eight year phase in educational program begun in 1984. It provides a fundamental baseline of services in curriculum, programs not confined to subject areas, general standards, material support, and staffing. It was fully funded through 1988 but cutback in 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Block schedule - a flexible time arrangement, characteristic of middle grade schools that allows teams of teachers to schedule classes with time to better meet the academic and social needs of the students.

California Achievement Test - a national, norm-referenced test in reading, language arts, and mathematics administered to all third, sixth, and eight graders in North Carolina. In future years, the test will not be administered to all students but to a representative sample of the population.

Center for Early Adolescence - a national resource and service center affiliated with the School of Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill dedicated to improving the plight of 10 to 15 year olds.

Center for the Advancement of Teaching - a state-funded renewal program based in Cullowhee that holds seminars on humanities, arts education and sciences for teachers in North Carolina public schools.

Conditions of Being an Educator - a collaborative study of the school work environment of teachers conducted by the Public School Forum of North Carolina and select businesses in 1986.

Cooperative Learning - an instructional strategy that has students working together within the classroom. Students share responsiblities as well as rewards; both individual and group accountability are provided.

Criterion-referenced Tests - tests used to measure student performance relative to some established criteria such as the curricular goals in the *Standard Course of Study* . It does not compare students with one another. This approach measures levels of mastery.

Effective Teacher Training - a state-developed 30 hour research-based generic teacher training program available to all educators.

Elective Curriculum - areas of study in the *Standard Course of Study* that should be available choices to all sixth through eighth graders. These include second languages and vocational education.

Flexible Scheduling - see block scheduling.

Lateral Entry Program - an alternate plan for teacher certification available to college graduates who have not completed a teacher education program.

Homogeneous-grouped Classrooms - classes composed of students with similiar levels of achievement.

Heterogeneous-grouped Classrooms - classes composed of students with a variety of achievement levels.

House - a small cluster of teachers and students within the larger school; also called a school-within-a-school.

Interdisciplinary Team Organization - a group of two or more teachers from different subject areas who have a common group of students, a similiar schedule with common planning, and share the same part of the building. During team planning time, they address both the academic and affective needs of students and collaborate in developing their programs.

Leadership Institute for Administrators - an on-going staff development program for principals and central office staff offered by the Department of Public Instruction.

Mentor Program - a program available to initially-certified personnel in the first two years of employment whereby they are assisted and supported by an experienced teacher on a regular basis.

North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools - a professional association dedicated to improve school programs for young adolescents. Its members include all categories of public and private school educators, school board members, parents, and other interested individuals.

Peer Tutoring - a teaching/learning technique where older or more capable students provide academic assistance to their peers or younger classmates.

Required Curriculum - areas of study in the *Standard Course of Study* that should be provided to all sixth through eighth graders: arts education (dance, music, theatre arts, visual arts.....one required each year), communication skills, guidance, health, library/media and computer skills, mathematics, physical education, safety, science, social studies.

Scholastic Aptitude Tests - national aptitude tests used as criteria for admissions by most colleges and universities.

School-Within-a-School - see house.

Senate Bill 2 - The 1989 School Improvement and Accountability Act which offers local school systems the flexiblity to develop local plans to improve student achievement. Participation is optional. Flexibility is provided through waivers of certain state regulations and funding restrictions, additional funding for differentiated pay plans for employees, and the establishment of local goals.

Standard Course of Study - the required and elective curriculum in all North Carolina public schools kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Teacher-based Guidance - see advisory program

Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument - a state-developed instrument with specific criteria for the evaluation of probationary and tenured staff available by school districts.

Teaching Fellows Program - a state-funded fellowship program implemented by the Public School Forum to recruit, train, and retain talented individuals in the field of education.

Tracking - permanent grouping of students for learning based on similiar achievement levels.

Team Leader - a teacher within the interdisciplinary team organization who assumes a facilitative and advocacy role for team goals and activities.

Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century - a 1989 national report by the Carnegie Council Task Force on Young Adolescents calling for significant change in school programs and services for young adolescents.

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